

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency**Superfund Proposed Plan/Fact Sheet**

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East Hennepin Site Ground-Water Contamination

July 1991

Introduction

The purpose of this fact sheet is to describe a proposed plan for expanding a ground-water cleanup effort at a northeast Minneapolis Superfund site called the East Hennepin site.

The East Hennepin site is located at the edge of an industrial section of Northeast Minneapolis, at 2010 East Hennepin Avenue. Currently the property is unused. General Mills (GM) operated a technical center and research laboratories at this site from about 1930 to 1977. The company conducted food research there until 1947, when it also began doing chemical research on the premises.

Between 1947 and 1962, the facility disposed of solvents by dumping them into a soil absorption pit on the premises. The pit is believed to have consisted of three buried, perforated 55-gallon drums stacked atop one another, with the bottom of the deepest drum 10 to 12 feet below ground. Solvents were dumped into the pit and allowed to seep into the subsoils. GM estimates that as much as 1,000 gallons of certain laboratory solvent per year may have been disposed of this way. The soil around the pit became heavily contaminated by this practice, and chemicals have leached into the ground water.

No private or municipal wells are or

were ever affected by this contamination. Nonetheless, under a consent order negotiated with the MPCA, GM installed a ground-water monitoring network on the site and began operating a ground-water pumpout system. The pumpout system extracts water contaminated with volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from the surficial aquifer (the ground water nearest the surface) and a deeper bedrock aquifer called the Carimona, and sends it to an air-stripper for treatment. The stripper removes the VOCs and discharges the water to the storm sewer. Other pumpout wells send water directly to the sewer system for "passive" aeration. Except for maintenance periods, the pumpout system has been operating continuously since 1985.

Lately, ground-water monitoring has indicated the pumpout system needs to be expanded in order to meet the Consent Order requirement of capturing all groundwater contaminants above a concentration of 27 parts per billion trichloroethylene that may be coming from the site. The MPCA is holding a public comment period on the proposal, and will consider the comments received before finalizing the plan.

Why is this expansion necessary?

There are three affected aquifers, or water-bearing layers, under the site. The first two—the surficial and the

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THE MPCA WANTS YOUR OPINION

The MPCA is holding a public meeting to discuss this proposed plan on August 7, 1991, at 7:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Van Cleve Community Center, 901-15th Av. SE, Minneapolis. The proposed plan is open for public comment through August 30, 1991. Comments on the proposed cleanup plan should be phoned in or postmarked no later than that date, and should be addressed to:

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Carimona—are mentioned above. The third, a bedrock aquifer called the Magnolia, lies below these.

Trichloroethylene (TCE) levels in the Magnolia have varied greatly since monitoring began on this site.

According to the Consent Order, GM is required to provide a groundwater pumpout system comparable to that in the Carimona if TCE levels rise above 27 parts per billion. That is now the case. The MPCA is aware that the East Hennepin site is not the source of all the contamination in the Magnolia aquifer. However, GM has decided to expand the groundwater pumpout system to include the Magnolia and to operate the system in accordance with the Consent Order.

As stated above, no drinking-water supplies are affected by the contamination. In addition, because there are no drinking-water wells downgradient ("downstream" in terms of ground-water flow) of the site, no risk to drinking water supplies is anticipated. However, ground water is an important water resource which must be protected.

What does the proposed expansion consist of?

GM first proposes to perform two aquifer tests at the site. These tests will involve installing two wells in the Magnolia aquifer and running pump tests on them. The tests will help establish the degree of interconnection between the Magnolia and Carimona aquifers, and determine the optimum number and locations of Magnolia wells to be installed after the tests.

Map showing location of former disposal site and monitoring-well locations

Did the MPCA consider any other potential remedies?

In 1989, MPCA staff reviewed the possibility of using soil removal, rather than an expanded pumpout system, to address contamination at the site. However, investigations and studies to date indicate there is little contamination in the soil above the water table at the site, and the soil removal concept was dropped in favor of the proposed pumpout system expansion.

What's the next step?

The MPCA is holding a 30-day comment period, from Aug. 1 through Aug. 30, before making any final

decisions on the proposed expansion. Unless a need arises for significant modification of this proposal, the evaluation of the aquifer tests should take place this summer. The new pumpout system could be in place by the end of the summer. A public meeting on this proposal is scheduled for August 7th; see the front of this fact sheet for details. Comments are welcome either at the meeting or by writing the MPCA care of the person listed on the front of this fact sheet. Comments must be postmarked no later than Aug. 30, 1991.

Persons with questions may call Ralph Pribble at (612) 296-7792 or toll-free outside the metro area at 1-800-652-9747.

